

REMARKS

The title has been amended as suggested by the Examiner.

Claims 1-19 have been canceled and claims 20-28 have been added. No new matter has been added. Support for the amendment can be found in the Specification as originally filed.

The Applicants respectfully assert that the new claims are patentable over the cited prior art. In particular, none of the references teaches or suggests continuously purging with the gas filling at a superatmospheric pressure while heating the chamber to seal the discharge vessel. In Sudo et al., the discharge vessel is sealed by heating the vessel with a laser. The chamber itself is not heated. In addition, in Sudo et al., the chamber is first evacuated and the gas filling step is performed at a subatmospheric pressure so that the cover 18 and the flange 30 need not be fixed to the base 10 and the cover 18, respectively, with bolts. Col. 3, lines 39-60. In Hitzschke et al., all of the chambers 2, 3, and 4 operate at normal pressure and are not sealed off tightly from the environment. Col. 6, lines 1-11. In the second embodiment in Hitzschke et al. (Fig. 2), the entire process is performed in the same chamber 19. Col. 6, lines 12-56. However, Hitzschke et al. do not teach purging chamber 19 at a superatmospheric pressure while heating the chamber to seal the discharge vessel.

In view of the foregoing amendment, it is believed that the Examiner's rejections have been overcome and that the application is in condition for allowance. Such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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